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ODYSSEY

An Autobiography

Abstract and Preface

Title: *Odyssey.*

From the Holocaust to America's Space Program

Author: Frederick Raymes

Abstract: Essentially a Horatio Alger story covering the life of a teen-age Holocaust survivor in Nazi Germany and underground France and his rescue by American Quakers and other Organizations.

His penniless arrival in the US, the struggle for survival and education in New York, his role in the Aerospace industry in California and the US Army under assignment to Von Braun, his contributions to the US Defense and Space Programs, and his experiences as an International Executive in Foreign countries.

The story deals with deep-seated emotions about God's role in the Holocaust, the author's inner struggle to relate to the Germans he encounters, his guilt for surviving, culminating in his walk down the Auschwitz train tracks where his family left their last footprints.

Intended reader: The book is written for young adults of high school and college age. Events leading up to the Second World War and the growth and change of anti-Semitism are interwoven into the autobiography to set it in its historical context. The perfidy of the French Government is exposed, and the role of rescuers and the Churches explored. The narrative highlights the author's renewal in the US, and reaffirms that America continues to be the land of opportunity for those who are willing to struggle and to seek it out.

Preface: CHAPTER 1 FROM THE BEGINNING.

In December 1946 a large ocean liner, the "Isle de France" after a stormy crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, slipped into NewYork harbor on its way to Pier 86. On board the converted troop ship was a blue eyed seventeen year-old with curly blond hair weighing about 120 pounds. He was full of curiosity about the ship's maneuvers and the awesome sight of NewYork. He had traveled by himself with several thousand other passengers He spoke French with a slight German accent, but not a word of English. He knew absolutely no one in America

He was not particularly aware of his utter loneliness and totally penniless state as he started to disembark, because he knew that he had finally reached the land of renewed hope: America. . Renewed hope after having survived the Hell Hole of Europe, with its second World War and Holocaust during the previous six, or was it seventeen years? Utter loneliness because only he and his younger brother had survived. Father, mother, grandmother, uncles, aunts and cousin, all had perished, were murdered, in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Who was this young fellow who had landed that snowy December as a forlorn refugee? Who over time would renew his family with children and grandchildren and make significant contributions to Defense and Space programs of the United States?

How did he do it on his own? Why did he come to the US? How did he manage to get a University education? How did he get involved for 40 years in the US defense and space programs? How did he feel about working with Von Braun of V2 rocket fame, when the US Army sent him to Alabama? How did he react when he went back to Germany after 32 years? Why did he wait 26 years to see his brother again? Why did his brother go to Israel and he to the US? Why was he anxious to marry and have a family? What drove him and his brother to go to Auschwitz in 1990? Why does he still have a quarrel with God?

I hope to answer most of these questions, and maybe more, so you the reader, children and grandchildren will know the story and remember it. So that someday you won't wonder what the details were with no one to ask. That's one of my problems, there is no one to ask to fill in the holes of my early years

For some years this story has been percolating within me. I knew that some day it would surface, but for a long time I was hesitant to face the suppressed events which shaped my early years.

After years of hesitation I decided to write for the post World War two generation, including my children and grandchildren. I soon came to realize that for this generation to understand, the actual events would have to be set into their historical context with appropriate background.

Once started the events poured forth as if anxious to be put on paper for the future. Life's moments came alive as if yesterday, minute details long buried, resurfaced to be relived again some with joy, many in pain. The story unfolds in the following sequence:

The early schoolboy years in Hitler Germany. Germany's geopolitical life from WW1 to the advent of Hitler; the roots of anti-Semitism, the racial laws...Life after Nov. 1938 (Kristallnacht) to the deportation to France. Life in the French Concentration Camp...The Madagascar Plan, its place in the "Final Solution". Life in the orphanages, and underground life in Vichy, France, The role of various rescue organizations, the Quakers, the OSE.. the churches. France and its collaboration with the Germans, the parents deportation to Auschwitz, the end of WW two.

My emigration to the US. The years of struggle in NewYork. My affair with Aviation and the move to California, Marriage. Service in the US Army and working with Von Braun. Kids. The dawn of the Space Program. My role and contribution to Space and Defense particularly the Space Shuttle. International experiences as a Sales Executive. Family life and retirement.

